

HISTORY OF ORLEANS COUNTY CHURCHES

TOWN OF GAINES

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## HISTORY OF ORLEANS COUNTY CHURCHES

by  
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### Town of Gaines

The Town of Gaines was set off from Ridgeway on February 14, 1816 but a few settlers had taken up land in the area in 1809 and others came soon thereafter. The State laid out a road of sorts along the ridge in 1814 so that the pioneers could drive in with their wagons with less difficulty. Settlement then became more rapid. Most of the pioneers were God fearing people who began holding religious services soon after their arrival in the wilderness of western New York.

The first Church to be formed was Baptist, about 1816. Others were organized until there were eight Churches of different denominations in various parts of the Town before the end of the century. Five of them were still active in the early years of the twentieth century but only three are still alive in 1968. Two have been organized in more recent years so there are now five Churches in the Town of Gaines.

The first house of worship was erected in 1824 but not entirely for religious reasons. The County of Orleans was being organized at that time and there was keen rivalry between the village of Gaines and the little canal hamlet of Newport, for the location of the County seat. It was thought that a Church edifice in Gaines might prove to be the deciding factor. So some of the business of the village organized an association which built the meeting house at their own expense. The building failed to bring the County seat to Gaines but it did bring a certain distinction to the village as shown by the Marker placed in front of the building in 1937 by the New York State Department of Education. It reads:

First Church  
Built For Public Worship  
On Ridge Road Between  
Niagara & Genesee Rivers  
North Of Batavia  
Erected in 1824

It was never beautiful or ornate but was well of native Orleans County materials and is still standing in 1969. When it was completed an auction of the pews produced enough money to pay the cost building and the Association deeded the meeting house to the Baptists and Congregationalists in the village with the stipulation that any future religious societies which might be organized later be allowed to meet there when not in use by the new owners. It is now owned by the Town of Gaines.

Six other church edifices were erected in the Town during the next 25 years, one of which was torn down and replaced by a larger building in that period. All of the others were still standing in the second decade of the present century. Then the Wesleyan church at Eagle Harbor burned down and in 1950 the Congregational building was destroyed by fire. In 1968 two of the old buildings are still in use by active Churches. The Cobblestone edifice at Childs is now owned by the Cobblestone Society which is restoring it. In Gaines Village the Congregationalists built a new modern church after the fire.

Two Churches have been organized in recent years one of which owns a small new building and the other is in the process of enlarging an old school which they purchased and remodeled.



## THE GAINES BAPTIST CHURCH

The Baptist Church was the first religious society to be formed in the Town of Gaines. The records of the Church have been lost so the exact date of its organization is unknown but it was probably about 1816. Pioneer Baptist Churches were not usually started by missionaries or ministers from outside the area but rather by people of Baptist background who had taken up land in various settlements. Such a group would meet together for Bible reading, prayer, personal testimony and the singing of hymns and constitute themselves as a Church. With the basic Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of believers, they did not think it was necessary to have a clergyman in order to organize a Church. Undoubtedly the Baptist Society in Gaines was founded in this way.

In 1817, Simeon Dutcher, a Baptist preacher from the eastern part of the State settled in Carlton. In addition to working his farm to support his family he freely ministered to the settlers of all religious denominations, or none, who desired his services, officiating at weddings and funerals and preaching in school houses or homes wherever the people wished to gather for religious services. The little Church at Gaines invited the Rev. Dutcher to become their pastor and he did so. A few years later he moved from Carlton to Gaines. The Church prospered for a number of years drawing members from a wide area, including Carlton. Services were held in the school house until 1824 when the first meeting house in the county was built by a company of business men in Gaines. After the building was completed, an auction of the pews was held which brought in enough money to pay for the cost of construction. The meeting house was then deeded to the Baptist and Congregational Societies in Gaines with the stipulation that other religious groups which might be formed later, be allowed to meet there when not in use by the owners.

The Masonic Fraternity was a strong organization in Eastern New York and as soon as settlements in the Holland Purchase became large enough, lodges were formed here. A lodge in Ridgeway which received its warrant in 1816 included some members from Gaines. Later a charter was granted by Grand Lodge for one in Gaines. Simeon Dutcher, who believed firmly in the principles of Free Masonry was a member. In 1826 when violent anti-Masonic feelings were aroused by the alleged abduction and murder of William Morgan by members of the Order, many communities were torn apart by the dissension. Gaines was in the midst of the controversy because some members of that lodge were supposed to be involved in the alleged crimes. The Baptists demanded that their pastor renounce the organization. Elder Dutcher, convinced that the charges were false, refused to do so and was removed from the pastorate. Some members left the Church at that time.

When the Albion Baptist Church was organized in 1830, members of the Gaines Church living in that vicinity requested letters of dismission in order to be a part of that Society. Two year later thirteen members who lived in Carlton withdrew and formed the First Baptist Church of Carlton. The loss of these two groups so weakened the mother Church that she never again prospered. Services were continued for about thirty years but soon after 1860 the Gaines Baptist Church apparently went out of existence.

Pastors known to have followed Elder Dutcher were Elders George Davis, Arah Irons, Hervey Blood and B. Beckwith. There were probably others whose names have been lost.



## GAINES CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The First Congregational Church Society was organized in the village of Gaines on August 9, 1821, by the Rev. Eleazer Fairbanks, pastor of the Knowlesville Congregational Church. The following year the Society united with the Presbytery of Rochester but did not change its form of organization. Meetings were held in the homes of members or in the school house. When the meeting house was built in 1824 the Congregationalists and Baptists were given joint ownership and held their services there on alternate Sundays.

For about ten years the membership remained small. Then in 1832 there was a great revival and more than a hundred were added to the Church. Soon afterward the members decided to build a Church of their own. During 1834 a site was secured on the north side of the ridge a short distance east of the corners and an attractive frame edifice built. According to the Historical Album of Orleans County, the steeple was topped by an iron spire to which were attached a gilded vane and two globes. From the same source it is learned that tragedy occurred during the building of the church when a workman died as a result of being struck by a mallet which accidentally fell from an upper part of the structure. The new church cost \$2,500 and was probably partly financed by the sale of the "Gospel Lot" received from the Holland Land Company. Some years earlier the Company had agreed to give 100 acres of land to the first religious society organized in each town. The Baptists were certainly the first to organize in the Town of Gaines but the story is that when the land was made available, the Congregational Church applied for and received the grant while the Baptists were talking about it.

After building their new house for worship the Society sold their interest in the union church to two men who were interested in organizing a Methodist Episcopal Society. Their plans never materialized and the men later sold their half interest to John Proctor. In 1836 two small Carlton Societies merged with the Gaines Church and increased the latter's membership. They were the Kenyonville Congregational Society, of which there seems to be no other record, and the First Presbyterian Church of Carlton which was organized in 1831. The Gaines Church continued to prosper for another decade. It had transferred to Niagara Presbytery in 1824 when that body was organized. Then in 1840 the Church requested dismissal from the Presbytery in order to join the Western New York Association of Congregational Churches.

In 1847 this strong Church was torn by dissention. Although slavery had been abolished in New York in 1827 and had never been practiced in this area, it suddenly became a cause of dispute. There were many abolitionists here who spoke out continually against this evil. Other people, who also hated slavery, preferred not to discuss the subject in Church. There were also differences of opinion regarding temperance. Early that year a number of members withdrew from the Congregational Church and a few months later, others withdrew.

A group of these dissenters met in December of 1847, adopted strong resolutions condemning slavery, and the manufacture, sale and use of alcoholic beverages, and organized as a Church. They decided on the name, Free Congregational Church of Gaines. The new Society purchased from Mr. Proctor the half interest in the union church which the Congregationalists had held before building their own edifice. They repaired and redecorated the meeting house and held services there for 16 years. Ministers who served them were the Revs. A. S. Shafer, Wm. Dewey and Wm. Richardson.

After the emancipation of the slaves, the main reason for the division having been removed, the Free Congregationalists decided to return to the fold of the mother Church. The members convened on February 3, 1864 and adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, the providence of God has prepared a way for a ~~harmon-~~ harmonious union with the members of the Presbyterian Church in Gaines in a new Congregational Church; and

Whereas, fifty-one of the members of this Church have asked letters of dismission and recommendation that they may unite in a new Church to be called the Congregational Church of Gaines, therefore,

Resolved, that the First Free Congregational Church approve of the proposed organization.

The language of the resolution is somewhat obscure, for there is no evidence that the First Congregational Church of Gaines had ever changed her name or form of organization, although the Church was greatly weakened by the loss of so many members in 1847. Actually the members of the Free Congregational Church withdrew from that Society and rejoined the Church they had left sixteen years before. There were, of course, some who had joined the Free Church during the period of separation and now became members of the old Church for the first time.

The reunited Congregational Church now became strong and active once more. In 1869 the church was repaired and the parsonage remodeled and refurnished at a cost of \$4000. Part of the funds for this work came from the sale that year of the union church by the trustees of the Free Congregational Society to the recently organized Free Methodist Church. In 1894 the Congregational Church reported a membership of 130 and an active Sunday School with an enrollment of 100.

At the turn of the century the members again made extensive repairs to their house of worship. For many years it was customary for this Church to have a roll call of members in connection with the annual business meetings. Every member, even those living at a considerable distance made an effort to be present. Roll call, reports and other business were usually attended to in the afternoon, followed by a bountiful supper and a social evening. Reports given in 1904 showed the average attendance at Sunday School to be 70 and a Home Department of 54 members was ministered to by 8 visitors. There was a strong society of Christian Endeavor for the young people, a Missionary Society and a Woman's Christian Temperance Union connected with the Church. At the time of a renovation of the church edifice in 1914, memorial gifts provided new windows, communion table and pulpit desk.

Continuing into and through the midyears of the century, during times of depression and of prosperity the Congregational Church carried on with worship services. Religious instruction, support of the missionary programs of the denomination and service in local problems. Sometimes there were older pastors who could do little more than conduct Sunday services and some times young student pastors on a part time basis and occasionally a full time young minister. The Gaines Church often entertained the Niagara District of Western New York Association of Congregational Churches at their annual meeting. In 1950 affiliation was changed to the Ontario District. In 1948 the church building was again painted and the interior extensively remodeled and redecorated. The student pastor, Richard West, was ordained to the Christian ministry.



in an impressive ceremony in the lovely Church, May 19, 1950. In December of that year the recent improvements of the edifice were completed by the installation of an oil burner furnace. The choir was working hard preparing to sing the Christmas cantata on Christmas Eve.

Early in the morning of December 24, the 116 year old church was destroyed by fire. Although sorrowful over the loss of their Church home on which they had recently spent so much time and money, the members went ahead that evening with the presentation of the Christmas cantata as planned, except that it was given in the grange hall.

The faithful Church members met promptly to make plans for building a new edifice. For some years this had been the only Church in Gaines and everyone now helped the members with their task. A campaign to raise the necessary funds to add to the insurance money was carried out and the trustees put in charge of the building. Colonel Ball and William Woolston as assistant were hired as carpenters. Many hours of volunteer labor was contributed to clear the site and help with the construction and haul building material from various places. The large old parsonage was not in use at that time so it was sold to raise more money for the project. The women worked hard to provide funds for new furniture and equipment. Leading the people as pastor at this time was the Rev. Ronald Place. The basement was completed so that the postponed annual meeting for 1951 was held there on February 2, 1952. The attractive white frame church was completed and dedicated on September 14, 1952.

In 1956 plans were made for building a modern parsonage just west of the church. It was completed in 1957 and in July the Rev. and Mrs. John Minot moved into the new house. In September they held open house in order that all who had helped with the project might see the attractive parsonage which had been built.

The Church School had grown so much in recent years that by the fall of 1964 programs were hampered by lack of space. Members met several times to consider the situation. Colonel Ball drew plans for an addition to provide new classrooms. The Official Board accepted the plans with minor changes and asked Fay Hollenback to supervise construction. This he did and also, with other volunteers, contributed so much labor that the cost of the project was small compared to what it would otherwise have been. The new class rooms were dedicated on Sunday, February 13, 1966.

After the Congregational and Christian denominations merged, the Church reincorporated in 1954 as the Gaines Congregational Christian Church. The name is now usually printed, The Gaines Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. In 1968 the membership is 153. A program of Christian education is carried on through the Sunday School and Youth Fellowship which also sponsors many youth activities. The choir assists in worship services and the women work in the Rebecca and Rachel Guilds. The Church <sup>supports</sup> their denominational World Mission programs, the Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches and the Genesee - Orleans Ministry of Concern, in addition to their own local programs. At present the Church is led by Interim Pastor, the Rev. William Shaeffer, assisted by Youth Minister Martin Johnson, an American Indian student at C. R. D. S. Sunday worship service is at 11 a. m., Sunday School at 9:45 a. m. and Youth Fellowship at 6:45 p. m.

Officers are: Moderator - Richard Hollenbeck, Clerk - Mrs. Kenneth

Drew, Treasurer - Mrs. Clarence Paul, Chairman of the Diaconate - Gerald Thaine, Pres. Board of Trustees- LaVerne Morrison, Sunday School Supt. - Mrs. Winton Hatch, President Rebecca Guild - Mrs. Fay Hollenbeck, Pres. Youth Fellowship - Alice Hatch, Organist - Marcia Downey, Choir Director - Harry Sentiff.

The pastors who have served the Gaines Congregational Church since 1821, as nearly as can be learned are given below. The list may not be complete, and some of those listed may have been supplies for brief periods. In some cases only last names could be found.

The Revs. Eleazer Fairbanks, Cook, A. Rawson, Winchester, Evans, Goodyear, Bates, Joel Byington, Hiland Hurlburt, J. P. Hovey, Milton Buttolph, H. N. Short, M. Buttolph, J. S. Barrs, D.P.J. Hoyt, E. A. Keeler, M. H. Wilder - 1863-1865, H. M. Higley, R. S. Eggleston, Burritt, George Anderson, H. P. Frye, G. S. Merrick - 1886 - 1898, A.W. Ashley, E. G. Heal, C. H. Burroughs 1906-1920, A. E. Waffle (supply), G. L. White, John Miller, Lewis Pickett, R. Irvin Kelley, Robert Dick, Carl Rote, Richard West, Ronald Place, John Minot, James Branton, W. E. Stokesburg, 1963 -Oct. 1, 1968, Student Assistants during this period have been Arthur Broadhurst, John Pridnoff, and Martin Johnson. Since Nov. 1968 the Rev. William Shaeffer has been interim pastor.

## EAST GAINES BAPTIST CHURCH

The East Gaines Baptist Church, so active and influential today not only in Baptist circles but in many areas of Christian concern, began as a very small Free Will Baptist Church. Organized in 1822 by Francis B. Tanner, it was first listed in Holland Land Purchase Free Will Baptist Quarterly Meeting records in 1825, as the "Gains Church, Francis Tanner, Pastor." It was apparently the only Church of that denomination in Orleans County then. Membership was reported for the first time in 1828 as 12. Monroe Quarterly Meeting of Free Will Baptists was organized in 1833 with 14 Orleans and Monroe County Churches. That year the Church reported 27 members and F. Tanner, pastor.

Among records of the East Gaines Church is a biographical sketch of Francis B. Tanner, copied from the Free Baptist Cyclopedia published in 1889. From this we learn that he was born in Rhode Island and died in Chautauqua County, April 26, 1874, aged 81. He began to preach at the age of 17 and was ordained at the East Gaines Church in 1823.

Quarterly Meeting records show that Alanson Pool, an unordained preacher, served the Church in 1834 and after being without a pastor for a year, Orry Butts, a local preacher became the minister in 1836 and served for several years. During those early years services were held in the local school house or the homes of members.

The First Free Will Baptist Church of Gaines was incorporated on March 8, 1849 at a meeting held in "the usual place of worship in the house of William Stacy." The incorporation papers were signed by Eli Hannibal and Alvah Z. Mitchell who was the pastor at that time. The incorporation was recorded in the County Clerk's office. It is quite certain that the meeting house was built that year, for it is shown on an 1850 map of the County. The Building stood on the south side of the West Transit Church Road about midway between the Densmore and Lattin Roads. On the same map the Stacy home is shown south of the corner on the Lattin Road.

The meeting house was moved to its present site about 1865. Stanley Snyder remembers hearing his father, the late George Snyder, tell of riding in the church when it was moved from the former location. He was a small boy at the time, about six years old. He was born in 1859. Those pioneer members of the Church saw to it that their meeting house was well constructed. It was moved without any damage and still stands in 1968, sturdy and attractive on the north side of the Ridge Road, a little east of the Kent Road. The first of many improvements to the building was made at the time it was relocated. A large room was added at the south end to provide a place for Sunday School classes and for kitchen and dining areas.

County histories gave little space to this Church. The 1879 history, perhaps because it was inactive at that time, gave only a three and a half line notice which included the sentence, "There are no stated services held there at the present time but the organization is kept up." LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY, published 15 years later, in an equally brief mention of the East Gaines Church, did include the facts that the Rev. C. H. Hoag had been pastor since 1891 and that David Nesbit was superintendent of the Sunday School. Church records show that in 1890 the home of former pastor, John Willis, which was located next to the Church property on the west, was purchased. The Rev. Hoag and family were the first to move into the parsonage. The



debt incurred by acquiring the property was paid during the next ten years.

Rev. E. A. Estey began his seventeen year pastorate on April 1, 1910 and during that period many changes took place in the organization and improvements were made to the buildings. The once strong Free Will Baptist Denomination began to grow weaker near the close of the nineteenth century. With the passing years more and more of these Churches closed or reorganized until in 1913 the East Gaines Church was the only one left in the area. The following year the Church voted to drop the words "Free Will", from the name and accept the invitation of the Orleans Baptist Association of Northern Baptist Churches to join that body. Since then the Church has been known as the East Gaines Baptist Church.

Soon after the Esteys assumed the leadership, a small entrance from the east side was made into the shallow cellar. The next year the basement was deepened and a furnace installed. A trap door was placed in the floor of the Sunday School room and basement stairs built. At about this time Mrs. Estey suggested the installation of stained glass windows. The idea required a little time to take root but in 1914 money was received for six memorial windows. Two years later improvements, including a furnace, were made on the parsonage. During the same period the old hitching sheds on the north edge of the church lot and extending part way along the west boundary were rebuilt. In 1917, when the Town of Gaines needed a voting place for the eastern district, the Church trustees erected a suitable building on the west side of the grounds, south of the sheds, which is still rented to the town and is also used as a meeting place for Boy Scouts. Former sheriff Isaac Swart gave a bell to the Church in 1921 in memory of his parents and a bell tower was built from the ground up with the first floor room providing a vestibule.

During the first century of the Church's existence worship services Bible study, character building and support for the world outreach of Christianity was carried on by pastors and members.

The Rev. E. A. Estey died on December 14, 1927. The Church then voted to call the Rev. A. L. Pollock, pastor of the Kent Church to lead the East Gaines Church also. Mr. Pollock accepted the call and preached his first sermon at the Church on Christmas Day. The following summer when Alfred Pollock married, he and his bride came to the East Gaines parsonage to live. The reception for the pastor and his bride was the last social event to be held in the old combination dining room, Sunday School room and social parlor. Later that year the small basement furnace room was enlarged by excavation under the entire sanctuary to provide a large dining room which could also be used for Sunday School and an addition built on the north end for a large kitchen. Fellowship and Christian Education programs could now be greatly expanded. Rev. Pollock continued as pastor of the two Churches until October 1935.

With the passing years, especially after World War I, great changes had come in farming practices and the living habits of country people which made the problems of rural Churches more complex than ever before. The depression of the 1930s compounded these problems. During the last two years or more of his pastorate Mr. Pollock had become greatly concerned, as had other pastors and Church members. The late Dr. Mark Rich, an authority on the problems of rural Churches and a pioneer in the Larger Parish movement, suggested the idea to The Bridges Church, of which he was a former pastor, and to Rev. Pollock. After the Churches had considered the matter for a year or more, the First and Cen-

tral Baptist Churches of Carlton, generally known as the Kent and The Bridges Churches, and the East Gaines Baptist Church voted to enter into the plan. Each Church elected three representatives, who with the pastors were to organize a larger parish as an effort to better serve the religious needs of the entire area in which the three Churches were located.

The Gaines - Carlton Larger Parish was organized on September 18, 1935, by the Rev. A. L. Pollock and from East Gaines - Mrs. Curtis Murray, Mr. Ralph Poelma, and Mr. Stanley Snyder, from Kent - Mrs. Jay Buckland, Mr. Earl Strickland and David Strickland and from The Bridges - The Rev. Walter R. Hand, Miss Helen E. Allen and Floyd Furness. These delegates made up the first Parish Council which was the administrative body of the Larger Parish. Mr. Hand was elected Chairman, Mrs. Curtis Murray, Secretary and Mrs. Buckland, Treasurer. As he had recently resigned from the pastorate of the Kent and East Gaines Churches, Mr. Pollock could not accept an office. Several areas of concern were discussed and committees appointed to carry out plans. A committee was also appointed to plan a recognition service in the near future to bring the Larger Parish to the attention of the general public. The recognition service was held on November 3, 1935 at the Kent Church. Members of the three Churches took part in the program and Secretary John Smith of the New York State Baptist Convention spoke on the Challenge of the Larger Parish Movement.

Other projects planned at the organizational meeting were postponed until the East Gaines and Kent Churches secured a pastor. The Rev. Kenneth Roadarmel entered upon his pastoral leadership of the Churches, March 1, 1936 and soon afterward Chairman Hand called a meeting of the Parish Council. The first Parish Holy Week communion and the first Parish Easter sunrise service were held that spring and continued as a Parish tradition. Through the Council the Churches worked together on youth programs, Vacation Bible School and a teacher training course in the fall. In December 1936 the Rev. Walter Hand accepted a call to a Church in another state. Mr. Roadarmel then became pastor of the three Churches and chairman of the Parish Council. A student from C.R.D.S. was engaged as a part time assistant to work with young people and to help with the preaching and various parish activities. This plan has been carried on over the years. The pastor has resided in the parsonage at East Gaines and the assistant, after living a third of the time in each of the three communities for a few years, has generally lived in an apartment in the edifice at The Bridges. The Parish Council was soon increased in size by having each Church represented by six instead of three persons. They are elected to three year terms rotated so that not more than one third of the council would be replaced each year.

During the thirty some years since the Larger Parish was formed its activities have increased and some programs changed as succeeding pastors have brought in new ideas. The Parish Visitor, a news and announcement sheet for parish families was introduced in 1941 by Pastor Robert Howland and continued in various forms ever since. The Rev. and Mrs. B.B. Hathaway set up a Parish summer camp at a beach near Barker so that more area young could benefit from a Christian Camp experience. Contribution of food and equipment and volunteer help from the three Churches kept expenses low. The Hathaways also carried on religious instruction in the area district schools until all were closed by centralization. Separate Vacation Church Schools were united by the Parish and many children were reached in this way for about twenty-five years. In 1951 under the direction of assistant pastor, Dean Short, the average attendance at the Vacation School was 137 children with a staff of 30 teachers and



helpers and 20 drivers taking care of transportation.

During the period of the Rev. W. Gordon Carter's ministry the Parish Youth Fellowship started the collection of money at Halloween time to help feed the hungry children of the world. This UNICEF collection later spread to the Churches of Albion and elsewhere in this area. At this time the Parish Summer Camp was given up and the young people again attended Baptist State Camps or others of their choice. Also the Larger Parish under Mr. Carter's direction helped set up the first Orleans County Migrant Ministry.

The Rev. Paul F. Beech, the present pastor and his family came to the Parish in November 1957. Under his direction the make-up of the Parish Council has been changed from elected representatives to the officers and chairmen of boards of each Church and presidents of Women's and Youth organizations in order to improve communication between the council and the Churches. Vacation school was given up in favor of a Day Camp program for two different age groups at the fine facilities of the Curtis Murray Park. All Parish programs under Mr. Beech's direction have been carefully planned and artistically presented. In addition he has been active in the Niagara Baptist Association, Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches and Migrant programs, and in the New York Baptist State Convention of which he was elected president in 1968. Mrs. Beech has helped with Parish and Church activities and the three Beech children have been active in their age groups.

The Gaines - Carlton Larger Parish, in general, is responsible for Youth activities, summer programs for children, the observance of special seasons such as Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas, services of baptism, planning for various Parish wide projects. The parish is financed by offerings at Parish programs, the proceeds of the annual harvest auction and assessments on the three Churches.

The East Gaines Church has also continued to function as an individual Church since the formation of the Larger Parish. Regular Sunday worship services and Church School sessions have been maintained and an active Women's Fellowship carries on many projects. The members operate their own finances, maintaining and improving their property, paying a pro rata share of the pastor's and assistant's salaries and other Parish assessments and supporting Baptist Missions and other benevolences.

The Property has been greatly improved and fitted for present needs during the past twenty-five years. A new furnace was installed, Holman-Hunts "Light of the World" was placed at the front of the Sanctuary in a suitable setting as a center of worship. Memorial gifts purchased a modern organ which in 1966 was replaced by the gift of a finer instrument. The basement was extended by excavation under the old Sunday School room, adding a large room to the dining and educational area, rest rooms and storage space. The stairway to the basement was moved to the vestibule and the interior completely redecorated with new pews and new doors placed between sanctuary and vestibule. The old hitching sheds had been removed years earlier and the north end of the lot landscaped. More recently shubbery was planted around the front of the building, an attractive bulletin board placed and lighting arranged to illuminate the sign and edifice so that no one passing by on the busy highway can miss seeing the House of God. Memorial amplified tower chimes were given a few years ago and land acquired on the east side of the Church property to provide adequate parking space. The parsonage was enlarged remodeled and redecorated in 1961.

The 146 year old East Gaines Church is somewhat unique in having a number of families active in 1968 whose ancestors were among the early members of the organization. The names LaMont, Snyder, Nesbitt and for a shorter period, Murray, have appeared on the membership roll for generations. Also it is one of the few rural Churches in this area who have a number of families actively engaged in farming in their membership. In 1968 this is a strong Church with about 120 members. The Church School is staffed with well qualified teachers. For many years a Boy Scout Troop has been sponsored. The Church supports the Mission work of the American Baptist Convention and the State and Associational organizations, The Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches, and N.Y. State Council of Churches, The Genesee- Orleans Ministry of Concern and other benevolences. Individual members hold offices and contribute much time to projects in these various organizations, and other civic af

Sunday worship services are held at 11:15 a. m. and the Church School at 10:15 a. m.

1968 Officers were: Moderator - Thomas E. LaMont, Clerk - Mrs. Stanl Kast, Treas.- Henry Poelma, Fin. Sec. Mrs. Gordon Wells, Chm. Bd. of Deacons- Ralph Poelma, Chm. Ed. of Trustees- C. Eugene Leigh, Sunday School Supt.- Mrs. Arthur Poelma, Chm. Bd. of Chrn. Ed. Mrs. Ralph Poelma Organist- Mrs. Henry Poelma, Choirmaster - Arthur Poelma.

The succession of pastors is not entirely complete and some names may be incorrect but as nearly as can be learned at this time the list is: Revs. Francis B. Tanner 1822-1833, Alanson Pool 1834, Orry Butts 1836\*, Almah Z. Mitchell, Joseph Kettle, Oscar F. H. Spining, Johnson 1870-?, Bathrick, Isaac Hyatt, John Willis, Hullaby, Markham, Shirey, C. H. Hoag 1891 - 1899, Orrin R. Newman 1899- 1908, Mead 1908 - 1910, E. A. Estey 1910 - 1927, A. L. Pollock 1927 - 1935, Kenneth A. Roadarmel 1936. After Jan. 1, 1937 the East Gaines Church was served by Gaines- Carlton Larger Parish pastors. Rev. K. A. Roadarmel 1937 - 1940, R. I. Howland 1941- 1942, B. B. Hathaway 1943 - 1951, W. Gordon Carter 1952 - 1957, Paul F. Beech 1957 - 1969



FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY  
CHURCH of the GOOD SHEPHERD, FAIR HAVEN

A fine cobblestone building stands at Childs with this inscription carved over the front door: "Erected by the First Universalist Society in the year 1834 A. D. God is Love". Undoubtedly this is now the most widely known and frequently photographed church edifice in the town of Gaines and, indeed, in Orleans County.

It is owned by the Cobblestone Society which was organized within its walls in October 1960, for the purpose of preserving this church and the nearby one-room district schoolhouse and recognizing our rich heritage of cobblestone architecture in this area. Members and friends of that early Universalist Society saw to it that their house of worship was well constructed on solid foundations so that it remained structurally sound for more than a century and a quarter in spite of neglect in later years. Since the Cobblestone Society acquired title to the edifice it has been reroofed, a replica of the old belfry built on, the terrace and the entrance steps repaired and the restoration of the interior begun. A Cobblestone era Museum is being built up in the basement.

This pioneer church edifice stands strong and beautiful for all to see. The history of the Universalist Society in Gaines is more obscure but a number of records do exist and the Church of The Good Shepherd is mentioned in County histories. It is well known that John Proctor was a generous supporter of the Society. County histories state that he gave the site and erected the cobblestone church at his own expense. There can be little doubt about the site, for the original deed to that land, signed by John and Elizabeth Proctor and dated June 10, 1835 was recorded in the County Clerk's office a few weeks later, by the trustees of the Universalist Society. In spite of deeding the property to the Society, however, Mr. Proctor must have felt that he still had some right to it, for when he made his will on January 4, 1862, he bequeathed his rights to the building and the land on which it stood, to the Universalist Society. His will also gave a farm in Carlton to the Society and, after the death of his son William, 24 shares of Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge stock, the income from which William was to receive during his life.

An historical sketch of Universalism in Gaines, written by an early pastor of the Fairhaven Church, the Rev. T. D. Cook, was found a few years ago in the parsonage of the Universalist Church in Albion. This account states that Joseph Billings, W. W. Ruggles, Chauncey Woodworth, and John Proctor formed a group of Universalists in Gaines who met occasionally in 1832. Two ministers of that denomination, Kneeland Townsend and Charles Hammond, visited the area and helped the small group to interest others. As the group increased in number, John Proctor, who by hard work and business acumen had acquired considerable property since coming to this town in 1810, dreamed of erecting a splendid edifice for the Universalists on the best possible site. That site he thought, was not on his own property but on land owned by Caleb Knapp on the north side of the Ridge, a little east of the corners at Fairhaven.

In 1833 John Proctor bargained with Mr. Knapp for the plot of ground he wanted but for some reason the verbal agreement did not hold. The story is told, that, when in 1834 Mr. Proctor again negotiated for the lot, he had one of his workmen waiting with a load of stone. The instant an agreement was reached he signaled the man who opened the

fence, drove into the lot and unloaded the stone. The work of digging for the foundation walls was begun at once. Probably many people including children helped to gather from nearby fields, the large quantity of stones needed. Skillful cobblestone masons and carpenters were engaged and construction was carried on so rapidly that the building was completed the same year. The building committee who had been in charge of the construction consisted of John Proctor, Joseph Billings and W. W. Ruggles. According to the Cook notes the dedicatory sermon was delivered by the Rev. Stephen R. Smith to "an immense congregation". The steeple atop the belfry could be seen from a considerable distance in all directions, and as John Proctor had hoped the Universalist edifice became a well-known landmark.

A document found in recent years among the papers of another founding member of the Universalist Society, Joseph Billings, raises some doubt about John Proctor building the church entirely at his own expense. This paper reads in part: "We the undersigned agree to pay the several sums set opposite our names, respectively, for the erection of a meeting house for the use and benefit of the First Universalist Society of Gaines Gaines, to be built at Fairhaven ...". The paper was dated, August 29, 1833. John Proctor with a pledge of \$200 and Joseph Billings with \$100 were first on the list and twenty-nine other signers with smaller sums brought the whole amount to \$822, including a few pledges to be paid in labor or lumber. If those pledges were paid it seems probable that many more contributions would have come in the following year while the edifice was being built. But in that case, Mr. Proctor could hardly have claimed ownership of the building as he appeared to do in his will.

On the other hand, since this subscription list is dated 1833, the year that the attempt to purchase the site failed, possibly these pledges were allowed to lapse. The next year when he did secure the desired lot, Mr. Proctor, in his haste to start construction, may have decided to pay the cost himself. If the money was paid, possibly it was used for necessary furnishings, in spite of the clearly stated purpose of the subscription paper. At this date one can only speculate.

The Rev. William Andrews became the first pastor and was followed after one year by the Rev. A. C. Barry who served for two years. Mr. Andrews then returned to the Fairhaven Church but remained for only a few months before again resigning the pastorate. In December of that year, 1837, the Rev. T. D. Cook became pastor and was very popular with the members. However, after only six months of service he resigned to accept a call to the Universalist Church in Utica. The Fairhaven Church which had started out so auspiciously a few years earlier was then without leadership for four years.

It was during this period that history records another puzzling reference to John Proctor and the Universalists. In 1840 he bought a half interest in the union meeting house in Gaines and during the next seven years the Universalists held services there part of the time. As the Society was having difficulty in maintaining services in their beautiful new church at Fairhaven it hardly seems that another meeting place was needed only one mile distant.

The Cook history of the Church at Fairhaven states that regular services were started again in 1842 with the Rev. S. S. Curtis as pastor, and maintained quite regularly for more than twenty years. Among pastors who served during that time were the Rev. M. B. Smith, who was said to have also practiced medicine in Albion, Rev. T. J. Smith who carried on the work here in addition to that at Ridgewas Universalist Church, and the Rev. William B. Cook who served the Church for five



years. The pioneer Baptist minister, Simeon Dutcher, after being dismissed from the pastorate of the Gaines Baptist Church during the anti-Masonic trouble, turned to Universalism in later life and sometimes occupied the pulpit at Fairhaven. In 1857 the Rev. Alanson Kelsey began a seven year pastorate, conducting services every other Sunday and also carrying on the work at Clarendon and Ridgeway.

During the period of his leadership the Society reorganized with a constitution and bylaws, and incorporated under the laws of New York State on December 19, 1861. The trustees at that time were Arnold Comstock, Charles Danolds and George D. Bement. This action was probably taken at the suggestion of John Proctor, for his will with the generous bequests to the Fairhaven Church was signed and dated only a few weeks after the Society became legally qualified to hold property. When the Rev. Kelsey closed his ministry at the Church in 1864 regular services were discontinued and the Universalist Society of Gaines became practically nonexistent. During this period John Proctor sold the farm which he had intended to leave to the Church when he made his will. He died in 1868.

The Church remained dormant for ten years until the Niagara Universalist Association sent a missionary, the Rev. Nelson Snell to Fairhaven in 1874. The Rev. T. D. Cook candidly states in his account of the Church, that it was interest in the Proctor bequest which caused the Association to send the missionary. Realizing that a nonexistent Society could hardly claim the Suspension Bridge stock which Mr. Proctor had arranged in his will for the Universalist Society to receive at the death of his son, the effort was made to revive the Society and again hold regular services at Fairhaven.

The Rev. Snell proved to be the right man for the task. The edifice was in need of repairs. He first had the more than 300 panes of broken glass replaced in the many small paned windows and the interior cleaned and made ready for worship services. At the same time he was calling on the people and arousing their interest in the Church. Soon he was conducting regular services and had raised a thousand dollars for renovation of the building. The work was begun promptly and the old high pulpit, perched like a bird's nest on the south wall of the auditorium was removed, a platform built at the north end where a modern pulpit was placed and the pews reversed and cushioned. The doors of the pews were removed and used for paneling around the platform, the aisles were carpeted and walls and woodwork refinished. An unusual mural was painted on the north wall which created the illusion of a deep recess back of the pulpit. The rededication was held in June 1874 with the Rev. T. D. Cook, who had served the Church for a few months in his youth, being the speaker. It was on this occasion that he gave the history of the Church up to that date.

Under the leadership of the Rev. Snell the congregation continued to increase and when the missionary left for other fields of endeavor at the end of three years the Universalist Church appeared to be in a strong growing condition. T. D. Cook was called to the pastorate early in 1877, and began his work the Sunday following Rev. Snell's farewell service so the Church was not weakened by a period without leadership. Congregations continued to increase and it has been reported that the pastor often preached to audiences which crowded the church to capacity. Under his direction the Society was again reorganized with a membership of 125 and adopted the name, "The Church of The Good Shepherd. Rev. Cook did not move to the community and after a year or two the absentee pastor, present only for Sunday services, failed to hold the enthusi-

astic support of the people which he had at the beginning of this pastorate. The congregations gradually dwindled to a very small group of the faithful. Rev. Cook resigned in 1881.

The Rev. Thomas Borden became pastor on June first 1881 and continued until the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the cobblestone edifice. He had never been able to revive interest in the Church, however, and soon after the anniversary celebration regular services at the Universalist Church at Fairhaven were dropped. The Society kept up its organization by holding annual business meetings and did receive the bequest of the 24 shares of Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge stock after the death of William Proctor.

When the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church was organized in Albion some of the few remaining members of the Fairhaven Church joined the Albion Society. The income from the stock was used to make some repairs to the old cobblestone building and it became customary for the Albion congregation to hold services there at least twice every summer. When the Bridge stock was called in for redemption it had been many years since regular services had been held in the cobblestone church. The State Board of the Universalist Church at that time declared it an abandoned church and took over the building and grounds and the proceeds of the Bridge stock.

It was from the State Board of Universalists that the Cobblestone Society acquired the building. The deed was recorded on September 30, 1963. The work of restoring this beautiful cobblestone landmark and building up a cobblestone era Museum in the basement had proceeded so well that on August 18, 1968 the 134 year old cobblestone Church at Fairhaven, now Childs, New York, was dedicated as a Cobblestone Landmark, Early Nineteenth Century Rural Church edifice and Cobblestone Era Museum.



## EAGLE HARBOR METHODIST CHURCH

The settlement at Eagle Harbor began during the years the Erie Canal was being constructed in that area and increased when it became a shipping point on the completed canal. The first pioneers who came to the vicinity had no knowledge of the coming of the canal when they began taking up land in 1812. About 1818 the circuit riding preachers of Methodist Ridgeway Circuit found enough scattered settlers in the area to establish a preaching station to which all who wished to hear the word of God proclaimed were welcome. Later a Methodist class was started. When the village began to grow it is said to have received its name from the fact that the surveyors who laid out the route for the canal found there the nest of a large bird they thought was an eagle. As more people came to the village Baptist and Presbyterian groups were formed who met in one another's homes or the new school house for services. By the close of 1826 these groups felt the need for a house for public worship and wisely decided to join together to build one. Avery Starkweather gave a lot on which to build the meeting house, on the north side of the canal a short distance west of the main road.

On February 17, 1827 the three congregations organized and incorporated as the First Union Society of Episcopal Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians of Gaines. They erected a brick meeting house and each group held their own worship service there at different hours on Sundays. The Methodists being the largest group, paid half of the cost of building and the Baptists and Presbyterians together paid the balance. Differing somewhat in their Biblical interpretations and Church disciplines, they respected each others beliefs and worked together harmoniously for many years to maintain their house of worship.

When it was decided that a larger building was needed the first meeting house was taken down in 1845 and a new edifice built and maintained in the same way. The larger Methodist Episcopal membership continued to increase even though in 1833, some of the members who lived near Knowlesville withdrew from the Union Church in order to help organize a M. E. Church in that village. One reason for the growth of early Methodist Churches was the fact that ministerial leadership was always available. At first the young M. E. Societies were nurtured by the circuit riding preachers of Ridgeway Circuit. Later, the Churches grown strong enough to support a pastor alone, or combined into "charges" were assigned pastors by Genesee Conference. On the other hand, Baptist and Presbyterian Churches usually had to find their own preachers. This fact sometimes resulted in the development of consecrated discipleship within the membership and in other cases to a gradual weakening of small groups. The Baptists and Presbyterians of the Union Church in Eagle Harbor probably called on the pastors of Churches of their denominations in Gaines or other nearby villages to preach to them. In early years no doubt that Baptist farmer preacher of Shelby, Elder James Carpenter, who so willingly ministered to all who called on him, often preached to the little flock in Eagle Harbor. After some years as older members of the Baptists and Presbyterians died apparently their descendants either united with the Methodist Episcopal of the Union Church or with the Churches of their choice in Albion or Knowlesville, for their societies went out of existence at an unknown date probably about 1870. The Methodist Episcopal Church continued to use the union meeting house and retained the corporate name of the Society for many years. In fact some Baptist independence apparently rubbed off on the Methodist brethren, for they have been known to object to too rigid control by Conference.

During the passing years the members have repaired and improved the building so that it has continued to be a worthy place in which to worship God and carry on a program of Christian education and other Church activities. Soon after the turn of the century a two-story addition was built with dining room and kitchen on the first floor and a social room above. Later improvements have included electric lighting, oil heat, hardwood floors, new pews and new interior finishes. In 1965 the addition was remodeled to provide better Sunday School facilities and an annex was built in which rest rooms were located. Church suppers and social events for large groups are now held in the Community Hall, which is the former village school house.

The First Union Society of Episcopal Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians of Gaines, now known as Eagle Harbor Methodist Church is in Western New York Methodist Conference and supports Methodist World Missions. In addition to their local Church expense and larger Methodist outreach, the members support the Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches and the Genesee - Orleans Ministry of Concern. The women were organized in 1894 as a Ladies Aid Society which was reorganized some time ago as the Woman's Society of Christian Service. They cooperate in projects of Church Women, United. This Church and the Knowlesville Methodists are under the care of one pastor, since October 1968, the Rev. Howard Gabriel. The young people of both Churches are organized as a Methodist Youth Fellowship, meeting alternately in the two churches. Present Church membership is 65. Sunday worship services are held at 9:30 a. m. and Sunday School at 10:30 a. m.

Officers in 1968 are: Stewards - Alonzo Webber, Mrs. Francis Allport, Mrs. Everett Zarpentine, Mr. Harold Eddy, Mrs. Eugenia Sullivan, Mrs. Ray Webster, Arnold Licht, Mrs. Jennie Webber, Mrs. A. Licht; Trustees - Robert Roth, Francis Allport, Cleon Whiting, Everett Zarpentine, Alonzo Webber, Milford Allport; Lay Leader - Arnold Licht; Treas. Cur. Expense Mrs. Howard Babcock, Benev. Mrs. E. Zarpentine; Recording Steward - Mrs. H. Eddy; Communion Steward - Mrs. Ida Licht; Res. Lay Member - Mrs. Ora Hungerford; Supt. Sunday School - Mrs. Robert Roth; W.S.C.S. Pres. Mrs. C. Whiting; M.Y.F. Pres. Linda Zarpentine.

Pastoral leadership: Ridgeway Circuit Riders preached for the Methodists of Eagle Harbor for the first few years of their organization. From 1833 - 1931 the Eagle Harbor and Knowlesville Churches formed a Charge under one pastor who lived in Knowlesville and the names are listed in the Knowlesville Methodist history. Mr. George Wright, a local lay preacher, was in charge of Eagle Harbor Church from 1931 to 1945. Under his care this was a period of growth and strong Christian witness for the Church. During the next 14 years Eagle Harbor and West Barre formed a Charge under the pastoral care of the Revs. Edward Cross, R. W. Withers, Glenn Brewster, Jesse M. Young, E.T. Rowe and Gordon Proper for one year. Eagle Harbor was then placed with Millville and Knowlesville under the pastoral care of the Rev. Elmer Frink for one year. Since 1961 Eagle Harbor and Knowlesville have again formed a pastoral Charge. Many of the pastors in recent years have been Theological School students who could devote little time to their large Charges. In 1968 Conference gave a financial supplement to the Eagle Harbor - Knowlesville Charge for the pastor's salary and for the first time in many years, since Oct. 1968 they have had a full time pastor, the Rev. Howard Gabriel.

## WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

Among the nineteenth century Churches organized in the Town of Gaines was the Wesleyan Methodist of Eagle Harbor. Only one other of this denomination was formed in Orleans County, the Ashwood Wesleyan Methodist Church which is very active in 1968.

This denomination, which was founded in Utica, New York in 1843, has an interesting history. The Methodist Episcopal Church, after it was organized as an American denomination following the Revolutionary War, spread very rapidly over all parts of the country. This was due partly to the fact that its doctrines appealed to many people and also to the system of circuit riding preachers whom the bishops sent out to carry the gospel to newly settled areas. The Church had stringent rules against slavery. Every slave owner who joined the Church had to agree to free his slaves. This was willingly done by the few members in the north who owned slaves. But in the south where the whole economy of the area was based on the institution of slavery, members refused to comply. In fact had they been willing to do so they were prevented by state laws against manumission which were strictly enforced. General Conference of the Methodist Church at that time was ruled by a few bishops with absolute power. The bishops decided to ignore the rule against slave ownership and merely taught that Church members should treat their slaves fairly and teach them Christianity. As time went on, however, in the northern states where slavery had been abolished, antislavery sentiment grew stronger while the system was becoming more entrenched in the South. In this situation the bishops used all of their power to prevent a split in the denomination and would not allow the subject to be mentioned at General Conference. Since this was agreeable to delegates from the South and to others concerned only with outward unity, it was those with strong convictions against slavery who were outraged by the situation.

At the Methodist Episcopal General Conference in 1840 a majority report on issues of the times did not even mention the subject. When northern delegates tried to present a minority report condemning slavery, they were ruled out of order and not allowed to present it. Conference adjourned without an apparent break but immediately afterward a number of ministers withdrew from the denomination. Their congregations were heartily in favor of their action and they took the name, Wesleyan Methodist. The number of these Churches which withdrew from Conference continued to increase in New York State and in May 1843, a conference was held in Utica. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was organized as a denomination at that meeting. They adopted a discipline which prohibited the owning of slaves and the use of intoxicating liquors; provided for lay representation in addition to the clergy at conferences and the election of a president of the conference by vote of the delegates rather than the appointment of bishops by bishops. Otherwise the new organization resembled the Methodist Episcopal Church in many ways. Wesleyan Methodist Churches spread quite rapidly from Maine to Michigan before the Civil War.

In Eagle Harbor, a Wesleyan Methodist Church was organized in July 1843, only two months after the Utica Conference. Aaron Phipps, Nathan Shelley and H. J. Wirts were elected as the first trustees. After a few months of holding services in the homes of members or the school house, they began to plan to build a meeting house and raised the necessary funds. They secured a site on the south side of the canal, a little east of the main road and construction was begun in the early summer of 1845. The building was apparently enclosed by August, for records at the



County Clerk's Office show that the First Wesleyan Methodist Society of Gaines was incorporated at a meeting held at their church at Eagle Harbor, dated August 6, 1845. It was completed the following year. Locally this frame building was usually referred to as the "White Church" and the brick edifice owned by the Methodist Episcopal was known as the "Red Church". The Wesleyan owned a parsonage which was the second house north of the village school house. After the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Yates was organized in 1865 the Eagle Harbor pastor also served that Church.

When LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY was published in 1894, the history gave the membership of Eagle Harbor Wesleyan Methodist Church as 50, and a Sunday School enrollment of 60 with Charles Bennett serving as superintendent. Pastors who had served the Church up to that time were: the Revs. Asa Warren, Samuel Salisbury, Mr. Masten, Jonathan Sibley, Joseph Swallow, Benjamin Rider, D. B. Douglas, P. Glanson, C. W. Swift, D. B. Baker, L. W. Krahll, John Randolph, A. F. Dempsey, H. S. Bease, E. J. Pope, J. B. Fleming, R. F. Dutcher, O. Wright, F. S. Lee, and H. W. McDonald who began his pastorate in April 1891.

Records of this Church are not available but a few facts about the Church after 1894 have been learned from various sources. The Rev. Charles Sicord became pastor in 1900 and served until 1903. It is not known whether the Rev. McDonald continued his pastorate until 1900 or if one or more other pastors led the flock during the closing years of the century. Former pastor, Reuben Dutcher, made his home in Eagle Harbor after he retired from the ministry and is known to have supplied the pulpit a times. A 1908 directory of Albion and vicinity lists the Rev. Dutcher as superintendent of the Wesleyan Sunday School at that time. The Rev. H. R. LaVere followed Mr. Sicord in 1903 and remained as pastor for eight years. He was succeeded in 1912 by the Rev. Walter Readett. The Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist Episcopal in Eagle Harbor got along harmoniously and held each other in mutual respect. In October 1913, while the Red church was being redecorated and repaired, the M. E. congregation was given the use of the White church for their services.

The Rev. Readett served the Ashwood and Eagle Harbor Churches until the Eagle Harbor Wesleyan Society disbanded in 1918. The Readett family is well remembered in both communities. Miss Ruth Readett won the award for girls in the Signor Prize Speaking Contest at Albion High School in 1913 and her brother, Paul, won the boy's prize in that contest in 1916. Ruth Readett was married on June 21, 1917 to George Whitaker who was about to leave for overseas service in world war I. The ceremony was performed in the White Church by Rev. Readett assisted by the Rev. C. B. Whitaker of Houghton, father of the groom. The wedding reception and dinner were held in the parsonage.

On March 30, 1918, while the grounds were being raked and the meeting-house put in good order for Quarterly Conference which was to convene there that evening and continue the next day, the Wesleyan Church caught fire from burning leaves and burned down in spite of all efforts to save it. Services were continued for a time in a hall in the village but the membership had declined during the years and the small congregation decided not to rebuild. When the postponed Conference was held a few weeks later at Appleton, the Rev. Readett was transferred to Olean and the Eagle Harbor Wesleyan Church went out of existence.

While seeking information about this Church it was learned that Mr. and Mrs. George Whitaker celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary on June 21, 1967 in California where they are enjoying retirement.



## FREE METHODIST CHURCH

The Free Methodist Church of Gaines was organized in 1868 by the Rev. George P. Marcellus. The Society purchased the union meeting house from the Free Congregational Society which had disbanded as a Church. The members repaired and painted the building, put in stained glass windows and redecorated the interior so that it was again a worthy place in which to worship God. The Church was served by pastors of the Free Methodist Church of Kenyonville which had been organized a few years earlier.

In 1870 revival services were held and many converts joined the new Church and it became strong and active with a large Sunday School. Records are not available to show what the peak membership was but in 1894 when LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS OF ORLEANS COUNTY was written, the author stated that the membership had been declining for several years and was at that time only about 40. The Sunday School was still well attended. The pastors who had lived in the Kenyonville parsonage and had served the two Churches until that date were: the Revs. G. P. Marcellus, Wm. Jackson, N. A. More, J. Travis, S. Chesbrough, R. S. Phillips, G. P. Marcellus, C. B. Essex, G. W. Worthington, J. K. Chesbrough, J. J. Thompson, W. T. Hoag, J. G. Terrill, W. Manning, F. Chamberlain and A. G. Matthewson who was the pastor at that time.

Before the end of the century the Kenyonville Free Methodist Church had disbanded and the Gaines Church had to support a pastor alone and supply a parsonage. The Society purchased a house located on a lane running north from the Ridge Road on the east side of the meeting house. The few surviving members of the Church in 1966 could give few definite facts regarding its history since 1994. But a few details ferreted out from various sources outline the closing twenty years or so of the life of this Church. It is not known how long Rev. Matthewson continued as pastor. An Orleans County Directory for 1903 lists the Free Methodist Church of Gaines as being without a pastor. A directory for Albion and vicinity, dated 1908, names M. E. Ellis as pastor, William Spaulding, Supt. of the Sunday School, and Sunday services at 10:30 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. School records show that the Blowers family lived in Gaines from the fall of 1908 at least until the fall of 1911. Some residents of the village remember that Rev. Blowers and family was the last pastor to live in the parsonage on the lane. It was sold and moved to another location when Conference transferred him to a different charge. The Free Methodist Society then acquired the first house south of the Ridge, on the west side of the road to Five Corners. An old newspaper clipping shows that a Rev. Steele was pastor of the Church in 1912. An elderly former resident of Gaines remembered Rev. and Mrs. Kelley, Rev. and Mrs. Echer and their five children and Rev. and Mrs. Lattimore and their daughter, Mabel, living in the new parsonage during the next few years. Mr. Lattimore was probably the last pastor to serve the Free Methodist Church, as it was becoming too weak to support a pastor. Most of the older members had died and the younger generation had either moved away from the community or lost interest in the Church. An item in an Albion paper tells of Free Methodist Quarterly Conference meeting being held in the Gaines Church, July 6, 1917. This was probably the last year that regular services were held. Mr. Robert Woolston, who had long been a consecrated member, secured preachers for occasional services and attempted to revive interest in the Church but his efforts met with so little success that he finally gave up. In 1921, as the last surviving trustee of the Free Methodist Society of Gaines, Robert Woolston, sold the old meeting house to John Bauer. The building was never again used as a church and was later purchased by the Town of Gaines.

## EAGLE HARBOR MISSION

One religious Society was established in Eagle Harbor in the present century. As it was started more than twenty years after the Wesleyan Methodist meeting house burned and the society disbanded, there have never been more than two Church organizations or buildings in the village at the same time.

Eagle Harbor Mission was organized in April, 1939 by the Rev. John Klotzbach in a small building which had at one time been the office of Eli Waters' apple dry house. The group soon purchased this building which stood on the east side of the main street, near the north end of the canal bridge. At one period the Mission also held services in an old church on East State Street in Albion. In 1952 the members built a new chapel next to the old building which was then torn down. The membership of Eagle Harbor Mission has always been small but very active and gives with great liberality. They usually give three times as much for missionary work as is spent for maintaining their local program.

The group is affiliated with Elim Missionary Alliance which has headquarters at Lima, New York and operates Lima Bible Institute. Eagle Harbor Mission supports a missionary in Kenya, Africa and helps support the Elim Center for treatment of drug addicts in New York City. June Klotzbach Lindsley was at one time the missionary in Africa whom the local Mission supported but because of her ill health the Lindsleys were forced to return to the U. S. A. Another member of the Mission, who is also a granddaughter of the late Rev. John Klotzbach and Mrs. Klotzbach, Miss Rachel Reid, graduated in 1966 from Lima Bible Institute and is preaching in Wayland. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Viola Klotzbach worked consecratedly to keep the Mission active, serving as leader and preacher in recent years when there has been no regular pastor. She was assisted in preaching by her daughter, Mrs. Anna Reid. Mrs. Viola Klotzbach died September 25, 1968, and her daughter has filled the offices held by Mrs. Klotzbach since that date. Mrs. Reid, who has had three years of Bible Institute training but was never ordained as a minister, is serving the Mission as preacher.

December 1968 officers of Eagle Harbor Mission are: Mrs. Anna Reid, Lorne Klotzbach, and Mrs. Mildred Kruger - Trustees; Mrs. Anna Reid - Secretary and Treasurer; Mrs. Mildred Kruger - President of the Missionary Society; George Reid - Sunday School Supt. Sunday worship services are held at 2 p. m. and 7 p. m., Sunday School at 1 p. m. The Young People's Society meets Tuesday evenings and Prayer Meetings on Thursday evenings.

Former pastors of Eagle Harbor Mission are the Revs. John Klotzbach, Clyde Jones, Darwin Shea, Genevieve Williamson, Claude Marsh, Lorne Klotzbach, Hollis Wilhelm, John P. Klotzbach and David Turnbull.



## SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

Shiloh Baptist Church is the youngest Church in the Town of Gaines. This group was organized in the old A. M. E. church on Ingersol St., on June 16, 1956. The Rev. Paul Faust of the First Baptist Church of Albion and the Rev. W. Gordon Carter of the Gaines-Carlton Larger Parish, assisted the pastor, the Rev. Johnnie Johnson in the organization of the Church with 12 charter members. Services were held in the Ingersol St. meeting house until 1960 when the school house at Rudd's Corners was purchased. Pews and pulpit furniture were installed and the school room made suitable for worship services. The entrance was remodeled with an office and restrooms.

Three years later the money borrowed for the purchase of the property was paid. A Mortgage Burning Ceremony was held on Sunday, April 21, 1963. Among those taking part in the ceremony, in addition to the pastor and wife, were Rev. and Mrs. O. Bradford, Rev. Harris, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church of Brockport who was guest speaker, and Rev. Robert Clark, pastor of Glad Tidings Baptist Church in Medina. At that time the membership of Shiloh Church had increased to 88.

As Shiloh Baptist Church continued to grow, plans were developed for building an addition with basement to the north end of the present church. The basement would include a kitchen and large dining room which could also be used for educational and social purposes and the ground floor would considerably enlarge the present sanctuary. It was also planned to place a belfry, topped by a steeple, over the main entrance to the old building. The building fund campaign was carried on during 1965 and 1966.

Ground breaking ceremonies for the basement were held on June 12, 1966 at 3 p. m. Niagara Baptist Association sent greetings by the moderator, the Rev. Lawrence Plumley and was also represented by the Rev. Burton H. Entrekin of Medina Baptist Church, Mr. E. T. LaMont and the Rev. Paul Beech of Gaines-Carlton Larger Parish. The Albion and Vicinity Ministerial Association sent greetings by the Rev. Herbert Cory of the Methodist Church of Albion and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vick brought greetings from the Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches. Also bringing greetings to the Church were the Rev. Edward Gunther of the New York State Convention and Mr. Lester Canham, Supervisor of the Town of Gaines. The Rev. Murphy Green of Aeon Baptist Church, Rochester, pronounced the benediction. The basement was completed and covered with a temporary roof so it could be used the following summer. The rest of the building project will be undertaken as soon as funds are available.

January 1969 membership is 125, Sunday School enrollment 35. Shiloh Baptist Church under the pastoral care of the Rev. Johnnie Johnson, is a member of Niagara Baptist Association of American Baptist Convention, supports the Albion and Vicinity Council of Churches and the Genesee - Orleans Ministry of Concern. Sunday Worship service is held at 11 A.M. Sunday School at 10 A.M. Prayer Meeting Wednesday at 7:30 P.M.

Officers are: Clerk - Miss Ruby Eason; Treasurer - Mrs. I. J. Carnegie; Trustees - Jake Patterson, Joe Lightel, Curtis Jackson; Deacons Alg Brown, Chmn., James Thompson, W. E. Moss, Curtis Jackson, Jake Patterson; Sunday School Supt. James Thompson; S. S. Sec. Veronica Patterson; Pres. Missionary Board - Mrs. Johnnie Johnson; Pres. Deaconesses Mrs. Curtis Jackson; Mothers' Board - Mrs. Cleveland Eason, Mrs. I. J. Carnegie, Mrs. Leonard Duson; Choir Director - Mrs. Johnnie Johnson.